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PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

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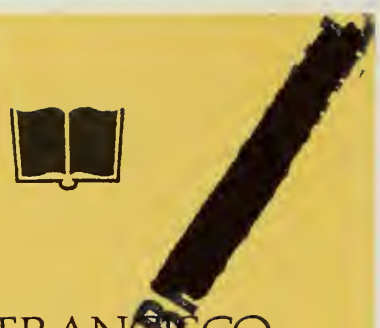

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of City Planning is charged with the responsibility of developing a Public Improvements Plan for the Chinatown Neighborhood Strategy Area (NSA). The Department and the Mayor's Office of Community Development have jointly identified the Chinatown Core Area as the first Target Area for the Public Improvement Plan (PIP) effort. This document is a compilation of proposals for public improvements to Target Area I of Chinatown. Included are policies concerning the preservation and enhancement of the neighborhood character, a description of project components and a list of possible improvement projects designed to carry out the policies.

These proposals are presented by the staff of the Department of City Planning for the use of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) chosen for the area. The Citizens Advisory Committee was created to enable city staff to consult with and obtain the advice of residents, business persons, property owners and neighborhood organizations regarding the planning and implementation of the Public Improvement Plan for the Target Area I.

Some of the proposals in the Plan derive from the community, some are newly proposed and others derive from recent planning efforts such as:

The Chinatown Neighborhood Improvement Plan, prepared by the Department of City Planning and endorsed by the City Planning Commission;

The Chinatown Core Area Traffic Circulation Study, prepared by Tudor Engineering for the Department of City Planning, November 1979;

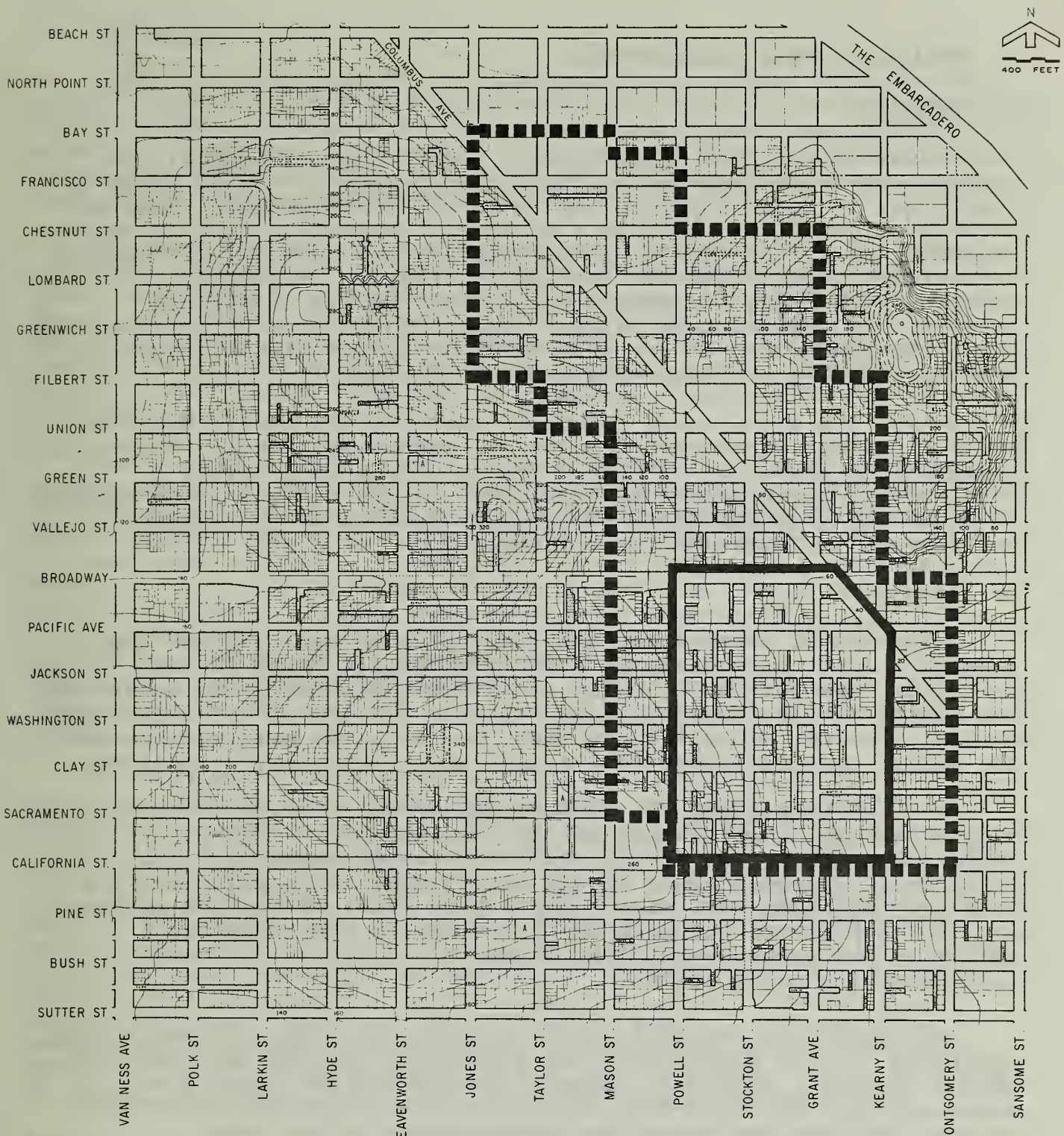
The Center City Circulation Program, sponsored by the San Francisco Transportation Policy Group; December 1979;

The Alleyways Study, Draft, prepared by the Chinatown Neighborhood Improvement Resource Center, December 1979

Various City departments have been consulted, but because the proposals are tentative and subject to more detailed study and development, no department has given formal approval. Modification and refinement of the details of each proposal will proceed as neighborhood desires are defined and possible conflicts are resolved.

This plan covers the Core Area of Chinatown, which for the purposes of this document is considered to be bounded by Broadway and Columbus on the north, by Powell on the west, by California on the south, and by Kearny on the east. A subsequent planning effort would encompass a larger geographic area of Chinatown and would include the larger Chinatown-North Beach Neighborhood Strategy Area shown on the following Map A.

Special mention needs to be made of citizen groups and committees which have been assisting the planning process and fostering improvements to Chinatown. The Chinatown Neighborhood Improvement Resource Center (615 Grant Avenue, Second Floor) is the "umbrella organization" which is responsible for many of the elements of this plan. The Committee for Better Parks and Recreation Facilities of Chinatown (920 Sacramento Street) has long been active in promoting such improvements. Numerous other organizations with areas of special interest such as housing, transportation, neighborhood design, the elderly, child care, etc. have helped in conceiving elements of this plan. Interested citizens can be referred to these groups by the Resource Center.



Chinatown Core Area - Target Area I

Proposed 1982 Chinatown/North Beach Neighborhood Strategy Area (NSA)

Map A

II. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION

A. General

Chinatown, with its human scale, its mixture of people, its varied commercial uses and cultural institutions, and its sense of tradition, is truly a unique San Francisco neighborhood. However, it is a neighborhood which in a number of respects is deteriorating. Contributing to the decline is the migration of long-time residents to outlying areas, absentee landlords, decaying buildings, overcrowded housing and public facilities, poorly maintained streets, and insufficient outdoor space. Families with children and those who can afford it are abandoning Chinatown, leaving the existing housing to immigrants and the elderly.

Behind the picturesque facade of restaurants, exotic markets, and curio shops, Chinatown remains the second most dense residential community in the United States. Due to overcrowded living conditions, concentration of low-income residents, and large numbers of youth and elderly, the need for improvements to the physical environment in Chinatown is critical.

B. Housing

Chinatown is located in the oldest part of the City and the average age of the housing is sixty-five years. Most of the buildings were originally built as residential hotels and constitute one quarter of the housing stock. Due to the age of the structures, obsolete design, illegal conversion, and deferred maintenance over the years, many buildings have fallen into substandard condition.

The area's density, 228 persons per acre, is seven times the city's average. One-quarter of the households are living in overcrowded conditions as compared with seven percent for the city. In spite of the unsuitable living conditions, these units are the only ones available for many lower income families and the elderly who are confined to the area due to economic, physiological, cultural, and language problems. Almost two-thirds of the households are lower income.

The absence of suitable vacant parcels and high land costs pose hardships in site acquisition for development of low and moderate income housing. Very high property values and the absence of moderately priced owner-type dwellings have prevented even middle income families from achieving homeownership in the area. Eighty-eight percent of the units are renter-occupied. Any public improvements plan must be considered as part of our overall effort to improve living conditions in Chinatown.

C. Recreation

Recreation deficiencies in Chinatown are critical in spite of recent efforts to improve and increase facilities. The deficiencies are more severe and more difficult to correct than those in most other high-need neighborhoods. Progress toward providing additional recreation space and facilities has been difficult and slow, due to high land costs and scarcity of suitable sites.

The area has approximately one-tenth the amount of open space generally available to other residents of San Francisco. These exists less than 2 acres of public open space in Chinatown to serve the current population of approximately 43,000 residents, plus the ever-increasing number of immigrants and continuous influx of visitors who inundate Chinatown on a regular basis. Together, these factors have created a demand for open space and public facilities that far exceeds their capacity.

The low income and restricted mobility of many residents limits opportunities to enjoy other citywide and regional facilities. The resulting overcrowding of facilities can be resolved by increasing their capacity and by providing additional open space and recreational programs. Playgrounds in Chinatown are intensely used; however, their layout and equipment often do not maximize their potential usage. If the layout of several playgrounds were re-designed and if play apparatus were replaced with more innovative equipment the recreation capacity could be expanded. With so many residents using existing facilities, regular and frequent maintenance is also needed to prevent deterioration of the play areas.

In addition to purchasing land for new recreation sites, improving the streets, sidewalks, alleys, and other public rights-of-way for recreation and beautification has great potential considering that such spaces are widely dispersed, easily accessible to residents, and most importantly, do not require acquisition by the City. Such "open space alleyways" can be adapted for not only passive enjoyment, such as seating for the elderly, but also for active use, such as play space for small children. With over thirty alleys or small streets criss-crossing the neighborhood, it is typical to find a variety of uses fronting these intensely used pedestrian ways. Dwellers of residential hotels and apartments, garment workers and their children, family associations and their members, social services agencies and their clients, and a multitude of small businesses daily flow into these alleys and streets.

D. Transportation

Chinatown has one of the highest concentrations of people and activities in the city and the streets and sidewalks are intensely used. The high volume of vehicular traffic in the neighborhood is a problem for the people who live in, work in, and visit the Chinatown area.

The current level of congestion is significant enough to affect neighborhood livability. Trucks and automobiles that cannot find loading or parking spaces often double-park or park on curbs. Public transit vehicles that must weave through the congestion are delayed, resulting in poor service and adding to the congestion. Pedestrians are subjected to hazardous and unpleasant conditions caused by congestion, pollution and noisy, narrow, crowded sidewalks, dangerous intersections, and heavy and fast traffic on major arterial streets. Without corrective measures, traffic will continue to be disruptive to residents, pedestrians, and transit and vehicle occupants.

Residents in the area are highly transit-dependent. The high percentage of low-income and elderly people plus the lack of parking spaces contributes to an extremely low auto-ownership.

Programs to reduce vehicular congestion in Chinatown are complex and are not part of this Plan. However, specific physical improvements can be designed to promote livability by controlling vehicle movement, by improving transit access and by increasing pedestrian safety.

III. OBJECTIVE AND POLICIES

The physical environment has a significant effect upon the satisfaction and outlook of local residents. People wish to live in a neighborhood free from hazards, stress, and physical deterioration. There are many basic human needs, such as health, safety and comfort, that must be satisfied close to home. Satisfying these needs contributes to the livability of the neighborhood. Efforts to improve the community should therefore deal with the physical environment.

The Objective of this Plan is to enhance the quality of Chinatown's public environment. The following Policies, some of which are derived from previous plannning efforts, are designed to implement this Objective.

Policy 1: Maximize Use of Existing Public Recreation Facilities

High land costs and lack of vacant land make the acquisition of new open space in Chinatown very difficult and slow. Existing facilities should be improved and more efficient lay out of recreation equipment provided so that they may be more intensely used.

Policy 2: Maximize Use of Open Space in New and Existing Public Developments

To ease overcrowding of existing public recreation and park facilities, the use of open space in other public developments, particularly schools and public housing should be increased. Wherever feasible, open space should be incorporated in future public developments.

Policy 3: Provide New Recreation Facilities

Opportunities for acquiring additional recreation space depend on the availability of funds and appropriate sites which do not require residential dislocation. Chinatown needs additional recreation facilities to alleviate overcrowding of existing facilities.

Policy 4: Use Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Rights-of-Way for Recreation Purposes

Conversion of underutilized small streets, alleys, sidewalks, and public rights-of-ways for limited recreation use can provide additional usable open space. Public areas should be examined for potential recreation opportunities in this dense residential area where public and private open spaces are almost non-existent.

Policy 5: Upgrade Streets and Alleys to Increase Pedestrian Safety and Amenity

Many streets and alleys in Chinatown are in such neglect and are so over-used that major rehabilitation and capital improvements are needed. Many alleys, particularly those used by pedestrians working and living in the commercial areas, are unpleasant and hazardous to walk through. Priority for improvements should be given to those alleys that are most heavily used by pedestrians.

Policy 6: Provide Higher Levels of Maintenance of Public Areas

Maintenance in the Chinatown area is a major community problem. The high residential density and the large number of visitors and tourists make littering a constant problem. Litter on streets and sidewalks and overflowing trash receptacles make it difficult for local residents to develop a sense of pride in their neighborhood. There is a need for a higher level of street cleaning and centralized garbage collection.

Policy 7: Emphasize Public Transit as the Primary Means of Meeting Chinatown's Transportation Needs

Methods to improve the transportation system in Chinatown should conform to the Board of Supervisor's "transit first" policy. Public transit represents a more efficient mode of transportation and often offers the only means of travel for most of Chinatown's residents, particularly low-income and eldely people.

Policy 8: Work Toward a Safe and Efficient Street Circulation System that Accommodates the needs for Essential Vehicular and Pedestrian Movements While Protecting the Neighborhood Environment

Streets are valuable resources that must be used judiciously to accommodate the essential needs of residents, shoppers, merchants, transit riders, visitors, and workers. The high demand imposed by Chinatown's unique setting makes it imperative that street space is used productively with minimum traffic congestion and conflict.

Policy 9: Improve Neighborhood Safety

The safety of the neighborhood can be improved by providing better lighting. Traffic speeds can be reduced with traffic controls and street intersections can be made safer with more visible cross-walks and more effective lighting. Noise can be reduced by slowing traffic and by street tree planting.

Policy 10: Preserve the Existing Community

The most difficult challenge of this program is to provide improvements to the neighborhood without stimulating property values and creating hardship to the existing community. Chinatown is undergoing economic shifts unforeseen even a few years ago. If no public improvements were made, property values would still escalate. Improvements do not enhance specific properties but are directed at improving the overall appearance of the street and the quality of life for all the residents.

Programs to guarantee reasonable rent structures and mortgages for low and moderate income residents are being instituted. These will be separate citywide programs and are not part of this Plan. Facilities for social service agencies can be improved or expanded; however, assistance in funding the provision of services is also beyond the scope of this Plan. Social needs, however, should be identified and solutions sought through other programs.

IV. PROJECT COMPONENTS

The items described in this section are the components of the specific projects recommended in the Plan. They are the building blocks of which the projects are composed. If properly located and designed, they will contribute to the quality of Chinatown's public environment.

A. Open Space and Beautification

Much of Chinatown's environment is highly urban, composed of crowded streets and high density buildings. It lacks many of the public amenities found in lower density neighborhoods. Neighborhood beautification items such as wall murals, street trees, street furniture, and closing alleys to vehicular traffic would contribute to a more liveable residential environment by softening the harsh appearance and adding a needed sense of nature.

Open space, in the form of parks and playgrounds, assumes special importance in such a densely developed community. The City has committed itself to the acquisition and development of several new sites to serve the neighborhood. Renovation of existing facilities is a continuing need because of their age and intensive use.

1. Park Renovation

The existing facilities are subject to wear and tear and will greatly benefit from continuing efforts to make them more efficient and attractive. Replacement, refurbishing and supplementing all manner of facilities, including landscaping, furnishings, play equipment, fencing and the like is needed periodically in all parks and playgrounds.

2. New Park Development

Selection of new open space sites is extremely difficult in Chinatown due to the competition for space for housing, business and other public needs. Three possible sites have been proposed through the City's Open Space Acquisition and Park Renovation Fund Program, and hopefully one or more will be acquired and ready for development in the next few years.

Traditional funding sources for these programs may become endangered in this era of fiscal limitations and could require that alternative sources are found to complete a project.

3. Closing Alleys and Small Streets

Some alleys and small streets should be closed to through traffic and may be separated from the main streets by gateways at their entrances. These gateways could consist of trees or be of a more formal architectural design, such as a protected roofed archway. They could bear the name of the street or alley and serve as a guide to newcomers and be a source of identity to neighbors. Another way to close an alley is by constructing a removable barrier either at the end of the alley or far enough into the alley toallow a service vehicle to unload.

Textured pavement is an attractive and inexpensive way to distinguish these alleys and small streets from traffic thoroughfares. Several feet of this pavement, at the entrance to each area, would be enough to create a feeling of separateness and could serve as a unifying motif for Chinatown's renovated backstreets. Other materials might include smooth concrete with redwood striping, and concrete with exposed aggregate. Large areas of brick are undesirable as they are difficult to clean and inappropriate for a child's play area. Smooth concrete is easy to maintain, can be painted or used for children's play, and can be attractively textured to accentuate planters and rest areas.

In these narrow alleys and streets, there is no need for sidewalks. The existing sidewalks in such narrow areas are an unnecessary danger and are often an obstacle to the elderly and infirm. Removal of the sidewalks would make the pedestrian way seem wider and would increase the usability of the space.

There are a large number of very narrow alleys that are little more than gaps between buildings. Often their only function is to serve as a passageway to and from a back entrance. These narrow corridors are difficult to keep clean and have served as hiding places for muggers. A narrow slitted gate with a light fixture between the buildings would increase security.

Informal resting spots in the form of planters, concrete blocks, low walls, or steps would provide a valuable service to shoppers, and in particular to the elderly who frequently need to take a moment to rest while on their daily rounds. However, except at sidewalk plazas and bus stops, benches should not be encouraged, as residents here noted that they can attract vagrants.

4. Sidewalk Plazas

Sidewalk "mini-plazas" offer an opportunity to create usable open space. They consist of a sidewalk broadened into the street to include the width of the parking lane and may be desirable at places where people gather, such as bus stops, and entrances to community buildings. Such plazas may include benches and bollards, phone booths, trash receptacles and neighborhood bulletin boards. The greater width of a sidewalk plaza could accommodate street trees.

Because of the scarcity of parking in the area, however, such widenings must be limited to places where parking is prohibited, such as bus stops, fire hydrants, red zones, and, in some cases, groups of driveways. Because sidewalks are often comparatively narrow, plazas may be limited to a size, which will not accommodate a wide array of features in any single location. Furthermore, visual security is enhanced by an open, uncluttered appearance. If plazas are located at street corners, they can reduce the distance required for pedestrians to cross the street and help make intersections safer.

Each location requires careful consideration as to what facilities are appropriate. A design which allows the space to be taken over by private vendors will defeat the purpose of the plaza. A design which encourages small groups to congregate and socialize could create a nuisance to adjoining occupants in one location while it might be complementary at another. To deal successfully with such problems each plaza must be individually designed in consultation with abutting building managers and ground floor occupants.

POSSIBLE SIDEWALK PLAZA IMPROVEMENTS

Source: Tudor Engineering

5. Benches, Shelters and Resting Spots

Benches should be provided at bus stops, in sidewalk plazas and at other places people gather. Bus shelters may be desirable at transit transfer points and other heavily used transit stops. Benches should be installed at all stops. For ease of maintenance, benches should be the standard Muni bench, a curved wooden seat on a steel frame mounted into the sidewalk.

6. Centralized Garbage Receptacles and Garbage Collection

Garbage cans and dumpsters are practical necessities. However, they are unsightly and often inadequate in preventing the accidental spillage of garbage. It is also illegal to have them permanently standing on the sidewalk impeding pedestrians as is the common practice in many alleys and small streets in Chinatown.

A solution to this problem would be to centralize the dumpsters on each street and centralize their point of collection so that collection trucks would not have to spend so much time obstructing traffic and impacting the neighborhood. Dumpsters are available with internal compaction capability so one unit can do the work of seven standard units. Each user or property owner would activate the unit with a key and the cost accounting would be taken care of automatically. The unit should be located along the curb in the street near the intersection to facilitate collection and reduce truck impact on the alleys. Enclosing garbage cans in a wooden fence-like structure that is also well designed would prevent inadvertant overturning and would be much more attractive than the unsightly cans, especially when the enclosure can be made part of a planter.

Coordination assistance to help carry out the improvements and work with users, neighbors, and the scavenger company to consolidate their collection points will be important.

Litter on the streets in Chinatown detracts from the pleasant character of the streets. Because of San Francisco's windy weather, litter blows all over the neighborhood. Additional trash receptacles and increased street sweeping can reduce the problem.

7. Remedial Beautification Programs

a. Mural Painting

There exist a number of buildings in Chinatown with large windowless walls. These bare, often drab, expanses are perfect for aspiring young muralists. Unlike landscaping improvements, the visual impact of a mural is an immediate improvement to the environment. The choice of mural topics and treatments is very broad and can include everything from brilliantly colorful treatments of social problems to restrained illusionistic painting of architectural elements. The intention should be to enhance the physical environment; hence, the murals should be primarily decorative, not political.

b. Painting of Light Courts

Not conspicuous from the street, but of profound incluence on the environment and the habitability of the adjacent dwelling units, is the dominance of dark brick and similar materials on side and rear walls, and in light wells and courts. Most dwelling units in the area open on to such spaces and many are never exposed to direct sunlight. Many rooms not facing the street look onto deep, narrow and dark courts between buildings. Few owners have sufficient incentive to paint these walls a light color; they may wish to avoid continuing maintenance costs of re-painting or they may sense that painting their building primarily benefits a neighbor's tenants, and they are not likely to ask the neighbor's permission to paint his building in order that their own tenants receive more light.

Under these circumstances, few owners will attempt to correct the situation. However, such painting is vital to the rehabilitation of the area. The answer lies in making public funds available in the form of a grant to improve light conditions in yards and courts, whether or not they are visible from public streets. Such an investment would be a lasting one, since repainting will not be necessary for a long time due to clean air conditions in the city.

c. Blank Wall Painting

Not all blank walls should have murals, nor are they all included in the light court program, yet many are very noticeable detractions from the area's beauty. Painting of these walls would certainly improve the area where groups of buildings abut an open space and are visible to the public, such as around parking lots, along alleys or rising above low structures. Coordinated color schemes should be developed.

The schemes would be developed by the City, working with the affected building owners. Compliance with the scheme would be a condition of the subsidy to the owner.

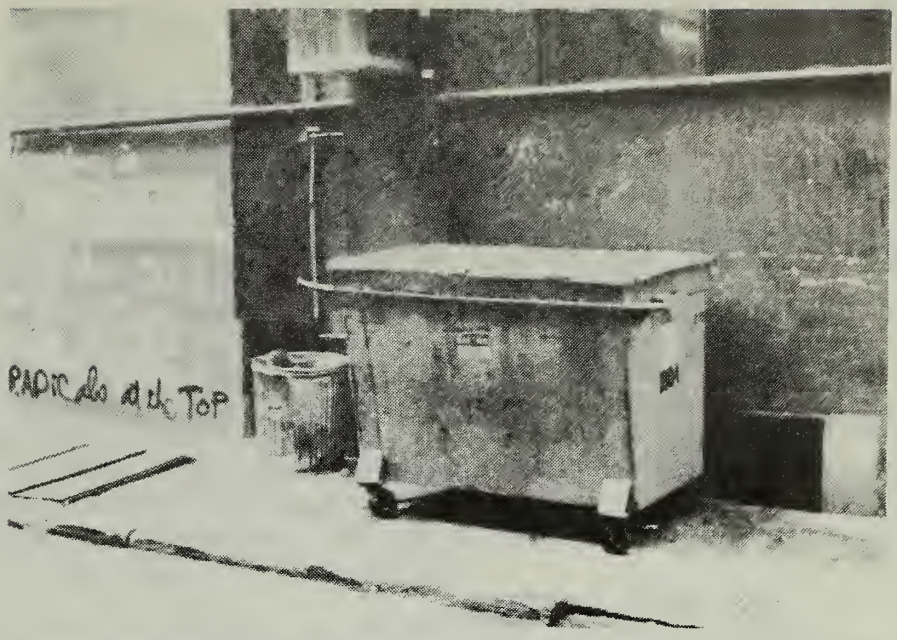
B. Planting

Almost nothing can improve a neighborhood's environment as dramatically and economically as trees and planting, provided they are well cared for. The City does not have the financial ability to maintain trees on all of its streets. Consequently, planting must be limited to where abutting property owners are willing to assume maintenance.

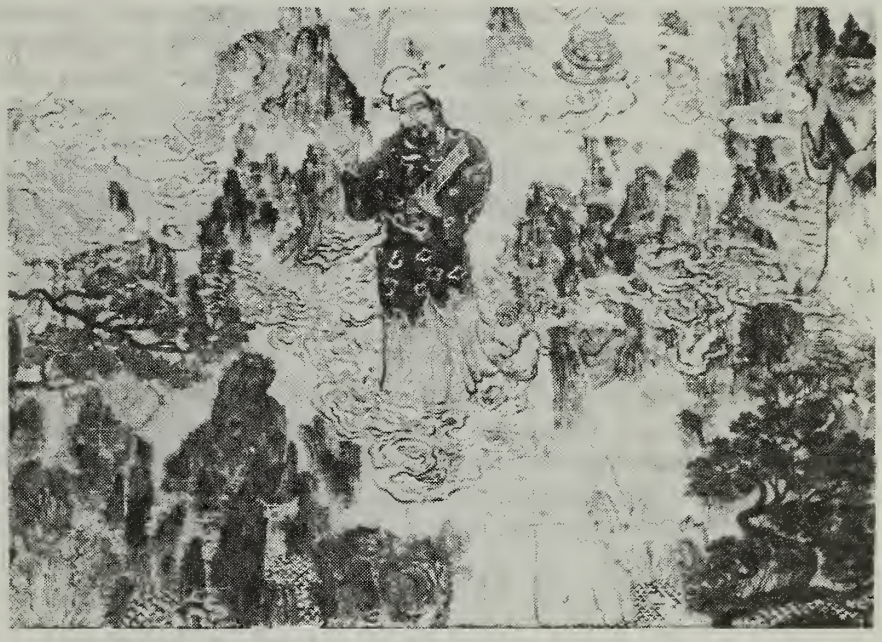
1. Street Trees

Most sidewalk situations in Chinatown do not allow for more than small, compact trees, commonly called "lollipop" trees. Larger trees need larger spaces or they will obscure windows and create seemingly dangerous dark sidewalks. Columnar forms or conical shapes can create an effect of generous greenery without occupying much space. Vines and other building huggers can likewise enhance the streetscape.

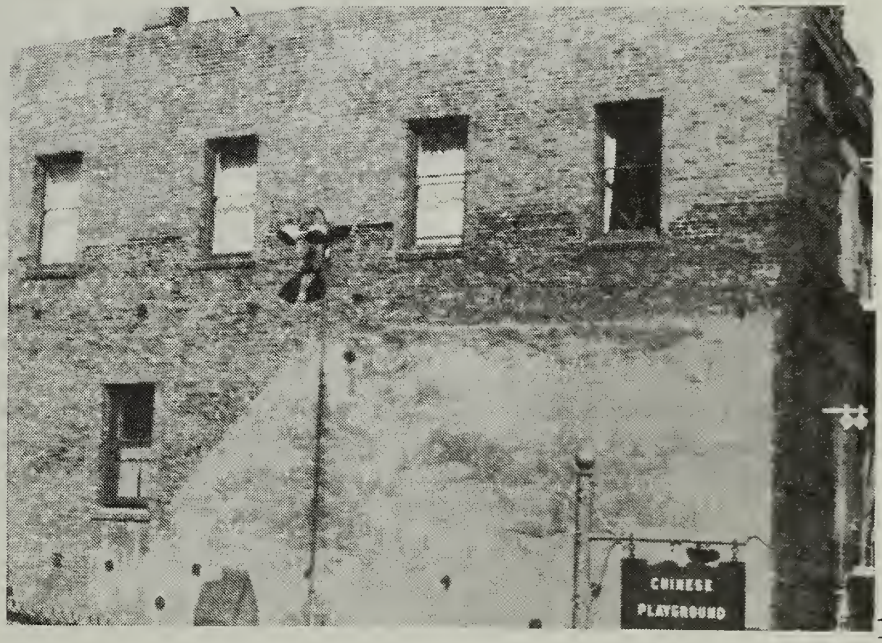
Garbage receptacles: More efficient and better-looking systems are available.



Mural on Ping Yuen North, Trenton Street near Broadway.



Painting of blank walls and light wells and courts brightens the environment.



Scattered throughout the area may be suitable locations for large trees. Because of the size of buildings in the area, only a large tree can have comparable visual impact and can significantly alter the area's appearance. In some instances they can be located on private property and overhang the street. Provision for large scale trees within the street area can be made at sidewalk plazas and wide areas at bus stops.

While planting would greatly improve the character of the small alleys, trees would be impractical due to limitations on space and light. Shrubs would be more appropriate but must be hardy, fast growing, shade loving, and require little maintenance. Trees could be used successfully for entrances to sidestreets and alleyways.

2. Roof Gardens

Rooftops are the area's hidden asset which have yet to be explored. Container gardening has become commonplace in more affluent neighborhoods. With encouragement in terms of financial and physical assistance and some continuing advice on how to garden, the rooftops of the area could become much more than a place of beauty. They could offer a chance to grow small crops as well as flowers and give opportunities for social interaction and recreation especially for seniors and the infirm in an environment that is safe and reasonably private. Cooperation of building owners will be required to carry out these projects.

3. Window Flower Boxes

Many residents may be interested in making a personal contribution to the beauty of the neighborhood, as well as their living quarters by maintaining window flower boxes. The goal is to provide a box to any tenant with a consenting landlord.

4. Planting Assistance

As with rehabilitation of building, all the good ideas and financing tools are valueless unless there is a staff with the responsibility of carrying out the program. Working with building owners and tenant gardeners on planting design, arranging and supervising installations and teaching garden maintenance require a talented and dedicated staff. The City has not previously provided this kind of staffing, having depended on the CETA program to provide street tree project organizers. The magnitude of the programs in this area will require a coordinator for the duration of the program plus occasional or periodic assistance including hired and/or volunteer labor.

C. Pedestrian Safety and Transportation

1. Traffic Barriers and Bollards

To prevent traffic from entering areas where it is unwanted or prohibited, traffic barriers are often needed. On narrow streets, drivers will park their cars on the sidewalk or in other pedestrian areas. While this allows traffic to pass, the clutter of parked cars is unsightly and is a hindrance to pedestrians. To prevent this, strategically placed traffic barriers and bollards can be installed. If properly designed, they can be resting places for the elderly. Also, they can lend themselves well to sculptural effects, harmonizing colors, or can have a dual function as planters.

2. Delivery Zones at Closed Streets and Alleys

On those alleys and small streets to be closed to vehicular traffic, delivery zones of some kind may have to be provided. These zones could consist of barriers erected 40 feet into the alley, thus allowing trucks to park for unloading while guaranteeing the essentially pedestrian character of the alley. The barriers would have to be removable to allow the passage of emergency vehicles. A second possibility would be to widen the sidewalks of the adjacent main street by several feet at the entrance to the alley. This would eliminate the problem of parked cars extending into the entrance. A third possibility, which excludes trucks completely, would be to paint a yellow zone along the main street, next to the alleyway, to serve as a specialized loading and unloading zone.

3. Lighting

A good night-lighting system can contribute significantly to the sense of security of the neighborhood. Additional lighting fixtures are best used only at a few problem locations, as they are very expensive. Conversion of existing fixtures to high-pressure sodium-vapor lamps can increase the level of illumination while decreasing the wattage of the fixture.

Along the smaller streets and in alleys, lamps must not be set too high above the street level. High lamps cast light into the windows of upper stories of residences while at the same time casting shadows where the light is really needed -- in the passages and entryways of the alleys. In order to be most effective and not take up valuable alley space, these lights should be attached to buildings near each doorway to cast light where it is needed.

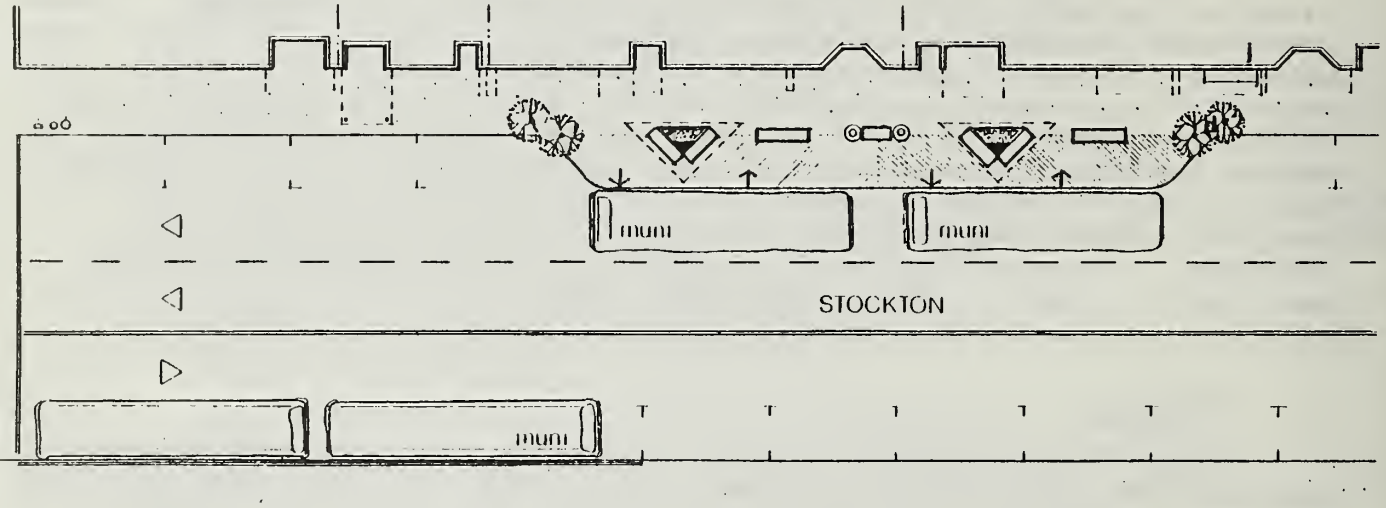
4. Intersections

At intersections, components are needed to increase vehicle and pedestrian safety by controlling vehicle movements and discouraging jaywalking. Included are reflective raised lane markers in the intersection, changes to the timing of traffic signals to allow more time for pedestrian crossings, more visible pedestrian crosswalks, widening of sidewalks at intersections to reduce street crossing distances, and new traffic signals at busy intersections.

5. Bus Stop Plazas and Bus Lanes

Widening the sidewalk at bus stops into the parking lane can help speed transit service so that buses do not have to pull out of and back into the moving traffic lane to board passengers. These widened sidewalk areas can become special plazas and can add to the usable open space on the street.

On Stockton Street, as part of a separate Muni program, transit improvements are planned which include, among other measures, an exclusive bus lane and widened bus stops. These bus stop areas should be similar in design to the sidewalk plazas mentioned above and should include benches and shelters for persons waiting for the bus. It may be desirable to allocate some funds from this public improvements program to ensure that proper amenities are provided on the Stockton Street bus stop plazas.



5. Public Telephones

Private telephones are scarce in Chinatown, particularly for the residents of rooming houses and hotels. Most of the public telephones exist in shops but these are few and often not accessible during those hours when they might be most needed. While funding for public telephones cannot be included in this Plan, the Pacific Telephone Company should be encouraged to install telephones at the entrances to certain alleys and along small streets. They should be set back from the noisy main streets and should have illumination and rain protection. Criteria for locations would be reviewed by the CAC.

V. SPECIFIC PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

The projects described in this section are designed to carry out the Objective and Policies of this Plan. The projects consist of the components discussed in the preceding section. These projects are not a complete plan. Rather, they are examples of projects which are appropriate and could have community support. Some projects consist of open space and beautification components. Others include increased planting and some deal with transportation and pedestrian safety. Most projects incorporate a mixture of different items, and it is difficult to include them in any one category.

A. Open Space Projects (See Map B)

1. Chinese Playground Renovation

The playground has had extensive improvements in recent years yet continues to have renovation needs although of more modest scale. Improvements should include the following:

a. Fence and gate refurbishing, including raising the height of the volleyball/tennis court fences.

b. Provision of a drinking fountain.

2. Portsmouth Square, Brenham Place and Kearny Street Bridge

The square has varied renovation needs, including but not limited to furniture additions and replacement, irrigation and water system repairs, painting, tiling, shelter waterproofing, concrete repairs, etc.

Brenham Place, which borders the square to the west, might benefit from a variety of beautification and landscape treatments which would expand the open space quality of the park without necessarily reducing its utility as a street.

The pedestrian bridge linking the park to the Chinese Cultural Center is underutilized and has potential of accommodating more facilities and activities to increase its recreational and aesthetic qualities. Both the bridge and Brenham Place should be the subject of more detailed planning.

3. Development of New Park Sites

If acquisition of any of the proposed park sites is achieved, their development will assume a high priority in the community. Landscape designs should be promptly developed in consultation with the community and construction should follow as rapidly as possible.

4. Ping Yuen Parking Lot Recreation Deck

One of the largest open spaces in Chinatown is the residents parking lot at Ping Yuen North Housing Project. The lot measures approximately 50 x 250 feet. The potential and feasibility of decking over this facility for park or recreational use should be studied.

Neighborhood liaison planners will be required to help implement the following projects with individual property owners.

5. Ross Alley

Ross Alley has been identified by the community as a high priority project, and there is consensus on specific components. A considerable amount of planning and some physical improvement already has been carried out. It is a project to be carried out in the 1980 Community Development Budget. All other projects are for 1982. It is an active street and well used by pedestrians. The abutting buildings have busy ground floor shops and small industries and some have upper floor apartments and private clubs. Cars standing or illegally parked often block pedestrian access. Service vehicles, although sometimes needed to serve adjacent businesses, further congest the alley and often damage buildings. Curbs and sidewalks have been removed and the street repaved under the City's Bicentennial Program.

Additional improvements will include the following components:

a. Restrictions on auto and service vehicle access by using removable entrance barricades 40 feet from either end of the alley.

b. Pedestrian scale lighting attached to buildings.

c. Resting and sitting places incorporating low planters for shrubs and small trees which will also protect buildings from vehicles.

d. Decorative paving patterns for children's games.

e. Pay telephones.

6. Hang-Ah Alley and Pagoda Place

Ideally located adjacent to the Chinese Playground, this could potentially become an extension of that area for the many users of the playground. In addition, the alley already has some existing amenities such as ample width, sunny exposure and scattered clusters of greenery. To enhance these amenities, a comprehensive design plan which includes the input of the entire alleyway community is appropriate.

Improvements could include the following:

a. Restricted vehicular access with delivery areas at the ends.

b. Decorative paving patterns incorporating children's games.

c. Landscaping and street furniture including lighting, game tables, benches, plaques, telephones, etc.

7. Spofford Place

Spofford Place has more traffic than Ross Alley, but like Ross, it offers potential for partial or permanent closure to create usable open space for neighbors. Recommended improvements for Spofford are similar to Ross, plus curb and sidewalk removal, undergrounding utility lines, wall mural painting on a metal corrugated building, and painting certain building facades a light color to bring more light into the street. By improving Spofford, Ross and Hang Ah Alley/Pagoda Place, an almost continuous pedestrian way can be developed from Sacramento to Jackson Streets.

8. Stone Street Between Washington and Jackson

This small street is heavily used by pedestrians because of its location next to the Chinese Hospital and a Public School Annex. It is a well maintained and serves residences on it. Improvements similar to Ross Alley would be appropriate including permanent or partial closure to automobile traffic, sidewalk and curb removal and undergrounding utility wires.

9. St. Louis Place

This is a narrow dead end alley without traffic and if it is cleaned up it can have open space value. Recommended improvements include:

a. Wall mounted lighting.

b. Trash receptacles and better cleaning.

c. Small trees and bench planters.

d. Paving.

e. Public telephone.

CHINATOWN PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS PLAN
Open Space Projects

Map B

10. Beckett and Wentworth Streets

These two narrow streets are almost end to end, separated only by Jackson Street. They suffer from similar problems of illegally parked cars and service vehicles on the sidewalks, owner-installed bollards, no greenery and dark adjacent building walls. If improved they could form an almost continuous walkway from Washington to Pacific Streets.

Recommended improvements are:

a. Closure to through traffic with restricted access allowed for service vehicles.

b. Curb and sidewalk removal.

c. Small trees and bench planters.

d. Lighting attached to buildings.

e. Decorative paving.

f. Blank wall painting.

g. Undergrounding utility lines.

11. Joice Street Between Sacramento and Clay

This handsome small street is especially used by seniors attending activities at the Cameron House on Sacramento Street. Illegally parked cars often block the sidewalk and bollards hinder people walking on the east side of the street. Improvements should include:

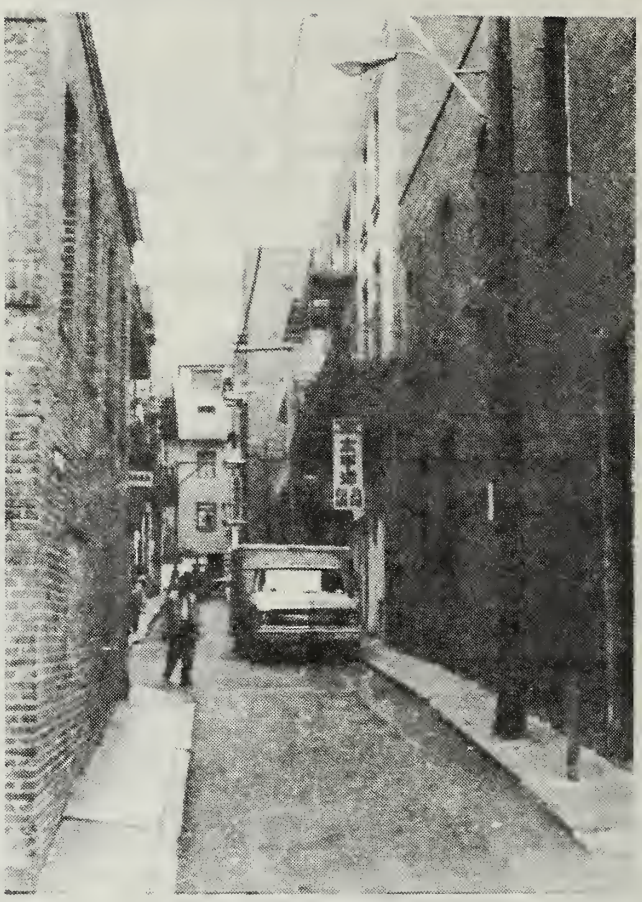
a. Sidewalk widening on the east side of street to aid pedestrians.

b. Sitting and resting bollard/planters on east side of street.

c. Additional post bollards on west side of street.

d. Improved street lighting.

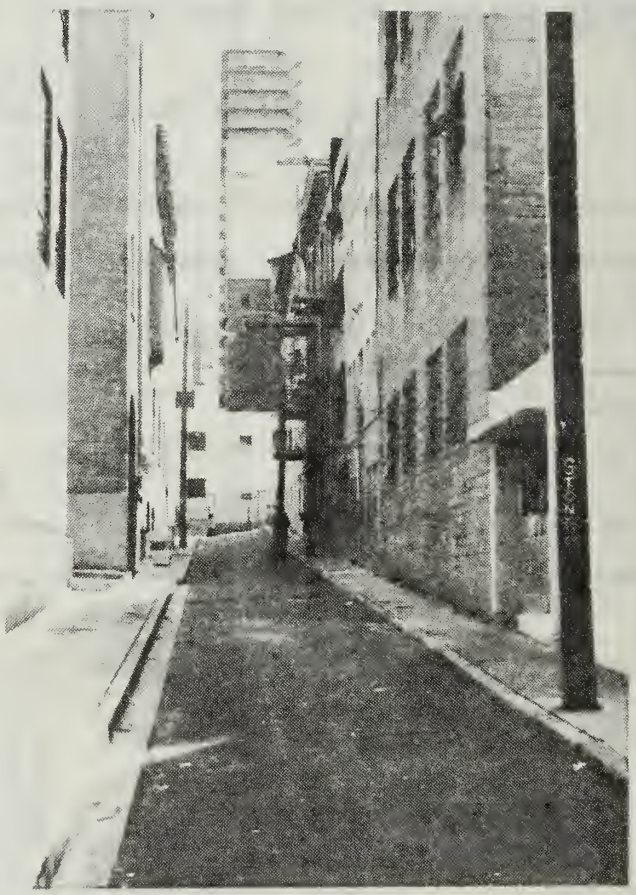
e. Undergrounding of overhead utility wires and removal of wooden poles.



Above: Ross Alley showing congestion due to standing vehicles. Note curb removal and new paving.

Top right: Spofford Place

Right: Stone Street



Beckett Street. Notice proliferation of dumpsters.

Wentworth Street

Joice Street

12. Trenton Street Between Jackson and Pacific

This narrow street is next to Ping Yuen West and is well-traveled by pedestrians. The sidewalks are narrow and the bollards in them to prevent parking often interfere with pedestrians. The sidewalks should be widened at certain locations, trees planted, and resting places installed near the ends of the street. The site of a four-car parking lot for Ping Yuen employees, part of the Ping Yuen project, on the west side of Trenton Street presents an opportunity for a new vest pocket park for the neighborhood.

Components which should be considered for the vest pocket park are:

a. Children's sand box and play items.

b. Lighting for evening use.

c. Litter receptacles.

d. Drinking fountain.

e. Benches and game tables.

f. Shrubs and planting.

g. Paving suitable for children's games.

13. Commodore Stockton School

This elementary school located between Clay, Washington and Stockton Streets serves 600 children. It has some of the only paved play space suitable for court games in Chinatown. Improvements should include the following:

a. Redesign of playground surface for more efficient use of court games.

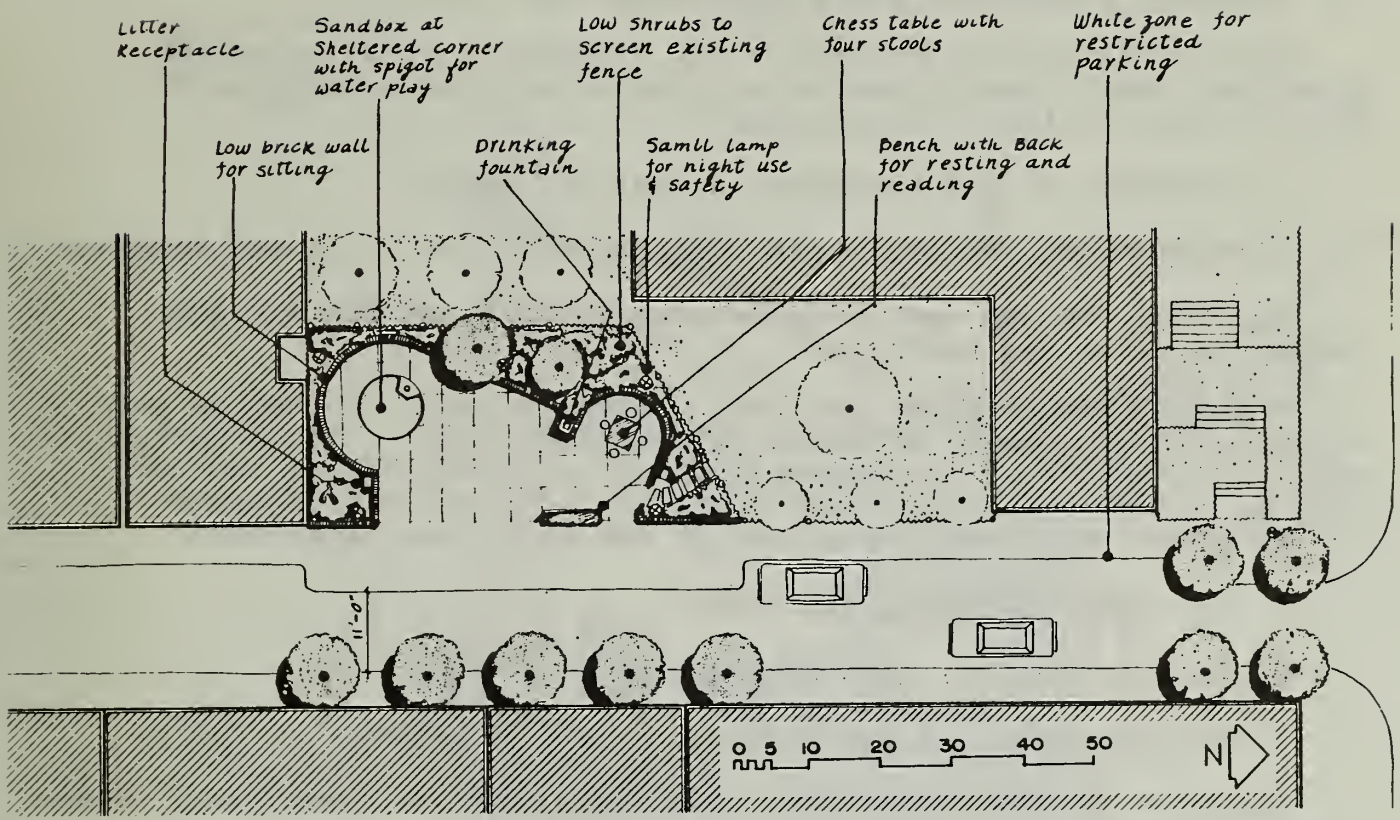
b. Expand existing play structure.

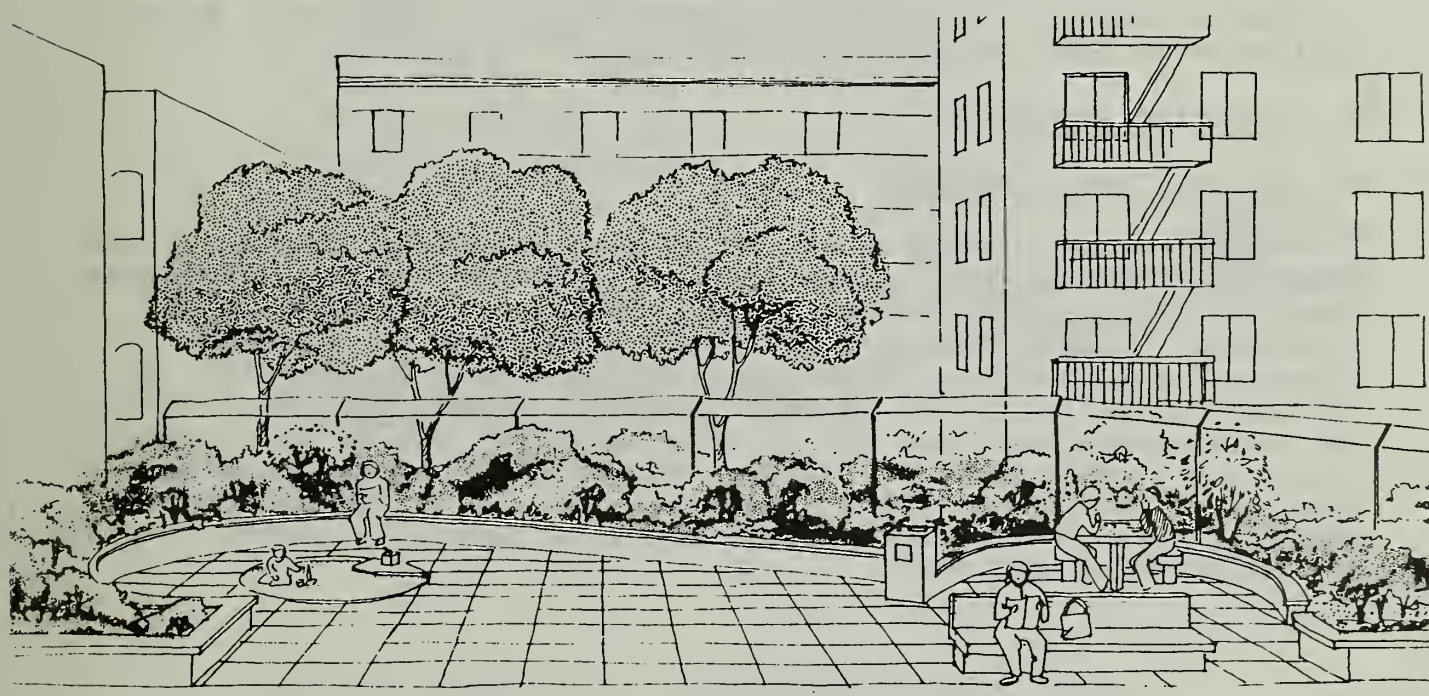
c. Provide resting/sitting planter benches along north side of Clay adjacent to the school for use by the elderly.

d. Mural location on retaining wall on south side of Washington Street.

14. Exercise Course for the Elderly

The network of alley improvements and open spaces may lend itself to development of a trail system. Such a system might accommodate exercise facilities similar to par courses elsewhere in the city, and perhaps adapted to the special needs of the elderly.


Litter Receptacle
Sandbox at Sheltered corner with spigot for water play
Low shrubs to screen existing fence
Chess table with four stools
White zone for restricted parking
Low brick wall for sitting
Drinking fountain
Small lamp for night use & safety
Bench with Back for resting and reading
11'-0"
0 5 10 20 30 40 50
N
PACIFIC STREET



TRENTON STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Source: CNIRC

B. Sidewalk Plazas and Bus Stop Plazas (See Map C)

The widening of the sidewalk for sidewalk plazas to include planters, small trees, benches and paving are recommended to be built at the following locations:

1. Jackson, at the northeast corner of Powell.

2. Washington, on the north side between Ross Alley and Stockton.

3. Grant, on the west side between Pacific and Jackson and between Jackson and Washington.

Widened sidewalks for bus stop plazas are also planned as part of transit improvement measures on Stockton Street. Their design should be similar to the sidewalk plazas and should also include a shelter and bench. They should occur on both sides of Stockton Street in the middle of the block at the following locations:

1. Between Broadway and Pacific.

2. Between Jackson and Washington.

3. Between Clay and Sacramento.

Shelters and benches should be installed at all Muni stops where they already have not been installed.

The transportation impact of these projects would need to be evaluated in site selection and design.

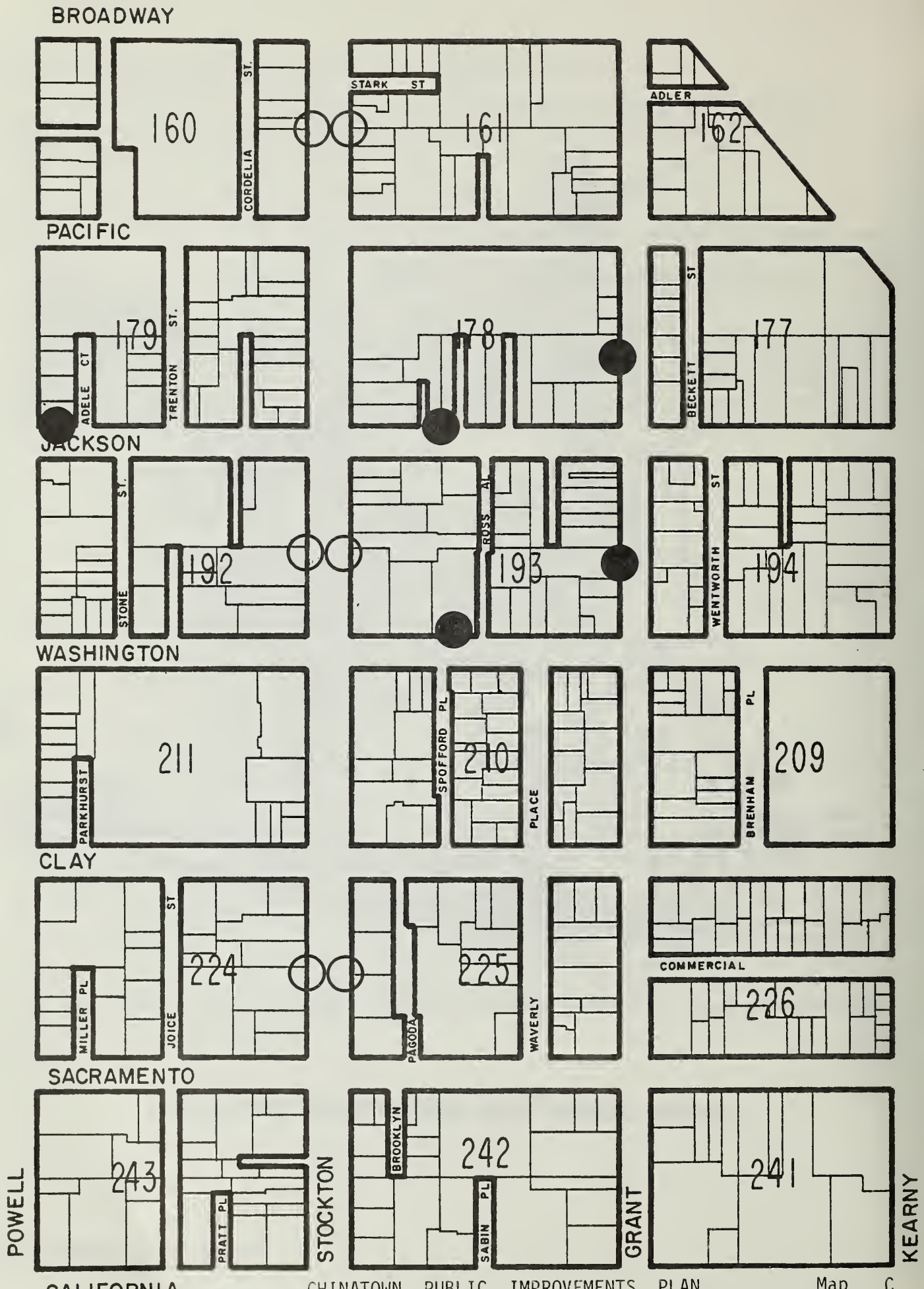
C. Planting Projects

1. Street Tree Planting

Based on field examination of typical Chinatown blocks, it was found that due to very narrow sidewalks, basements under sidewalks, heavy truck unloading activity and pedestrian congestion it is estimated for this analysis that only 50 percent of the block frontage is plantable. From other neighborhoods in the city, 25 percent participation by adjacent property owners in tree planting and maintenance programs can be expected. For the 18 block Core Area, 150 trees could be planted. The specific locations will be determined by further field examination by a planting coordinator who will work with adjacent local property owners to secure location and maintenance approval.

POSSIBLE SIDEWALK PLAZA IMPROVEMENTS ON GRANT AVENUE

Source: Tudor Engineering



CHINATOWN PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS PLAN Map C

Sidewalk Plazas

Bus Stop Plazas

2. Roof Gardens

Based on survey material provided by the Chinatown Neighborhood Improvement Resource Center, the location of residence hotels, apartments and private residence clubs was mapped for the purposes of finding potential roof garden locations. From the mapping it was determined that there exist approximately 363,000 sq. ft. of roof surface area for these buildings. These roof areas are shown on Map D. These locations will be reviewed for projects that can serve the greatest number of residents.

Based on similar situations in other public improvement areas, approximately 33 percent participation by property owners seems reasonable and that 25 percent of the roof area could be developed for roof gardens and sitting areas. The specific locations will be worked out by a planting coordinator and the property owners. The Department of City Planning will develop further criteria for roof garden locations to be reviewed by the CAC.

3. Window Flower Boxes

Likely locations for flower boxes are in residential buildings with sunny exposures and on windows facing small streets or alleys to be improved. Locations will be worked out by the planting coordinator, property owners, and tenants.

4. Planting Assistance and Coordination

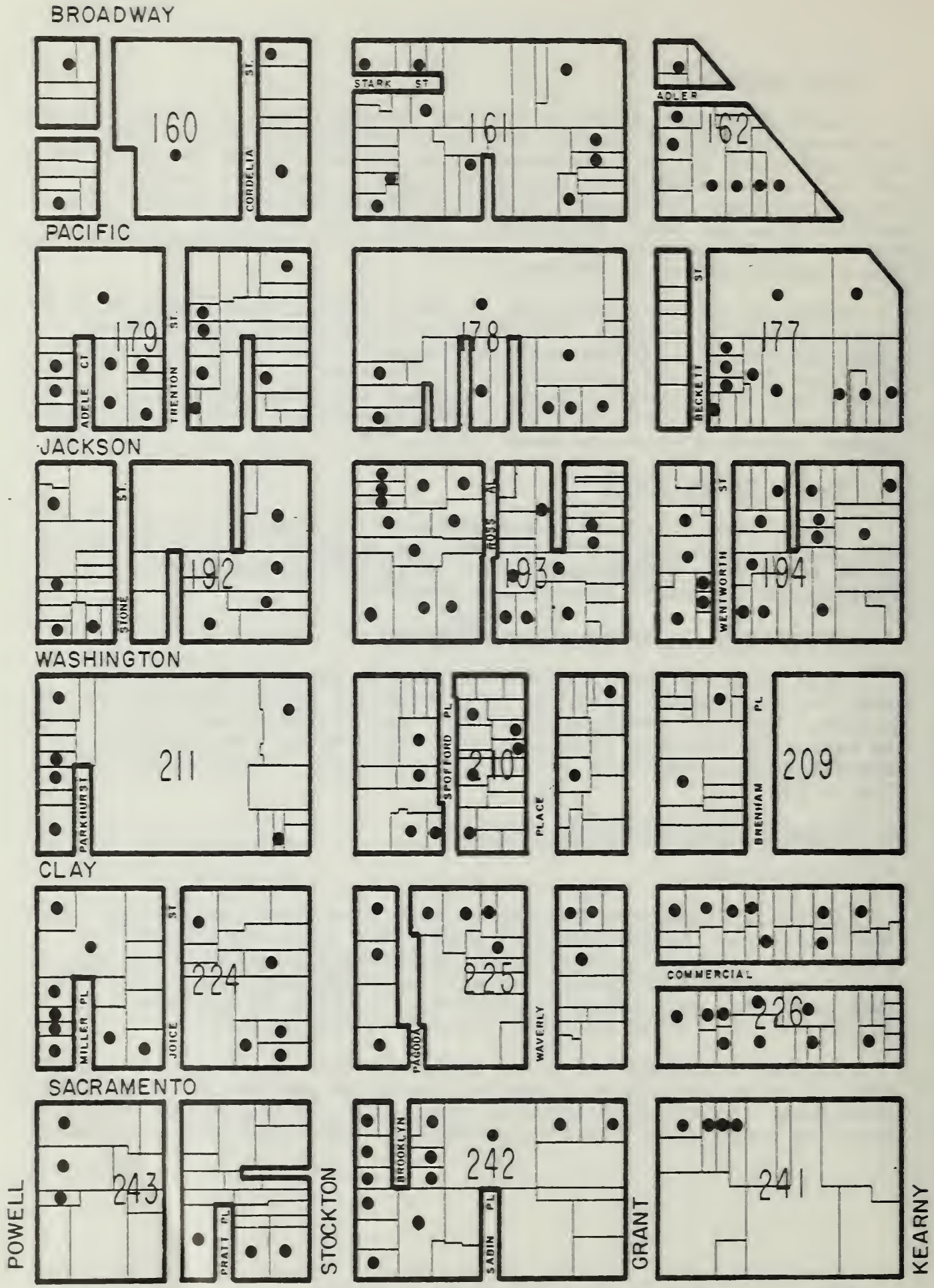
This position would include at least 3 person-years extended over the program duration, or long enough to ensure survival of new plants. Included would be provisions for volunteer and casual labor to assist in planting installations. The coordinator would help specify sites, negotiate with property owners, tenants, and assist City staff.

D. Remedial Beautification Projects

1. Wall Murals

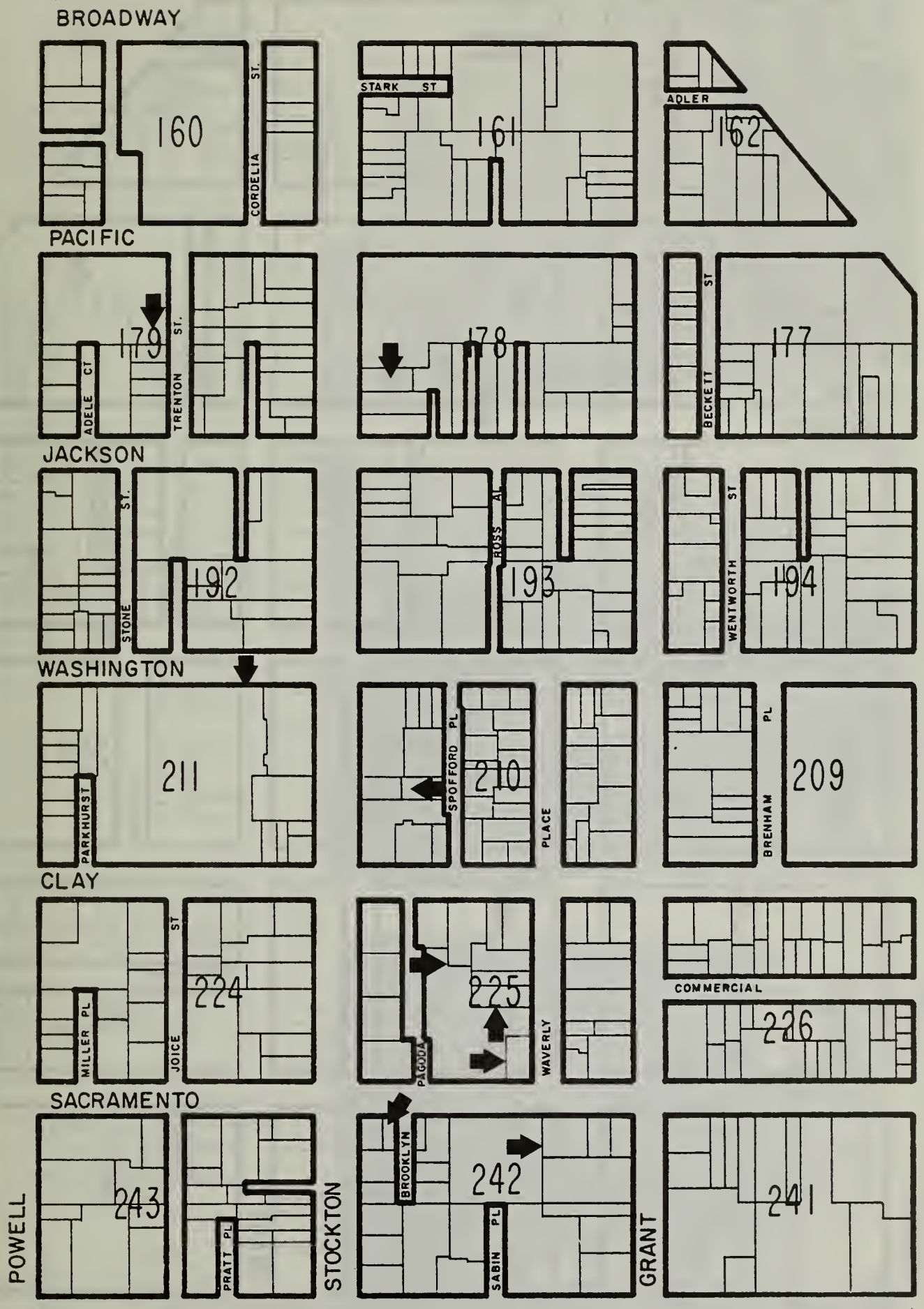
Potential locations for wall murals were field inventoried in the Core Area. These locations were based on visibility to the public and tenants, overall size, "paintability" of wall surface, and impact on and compatibility with adjacent land uses. Thirteen such locations were noted, encompassing a total of approximately 20,000 sq. ft. These potential locations are shown on Map E.

Further refinement of these locations will be carried out by the City Planning Department based on a detailed evaluation and rating procedure. Actual painting will occur with the assistance of a painting coordinator and the approval of individual property owners.



CHINATOWN PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS PLAN
Potential Roof Garden Locations

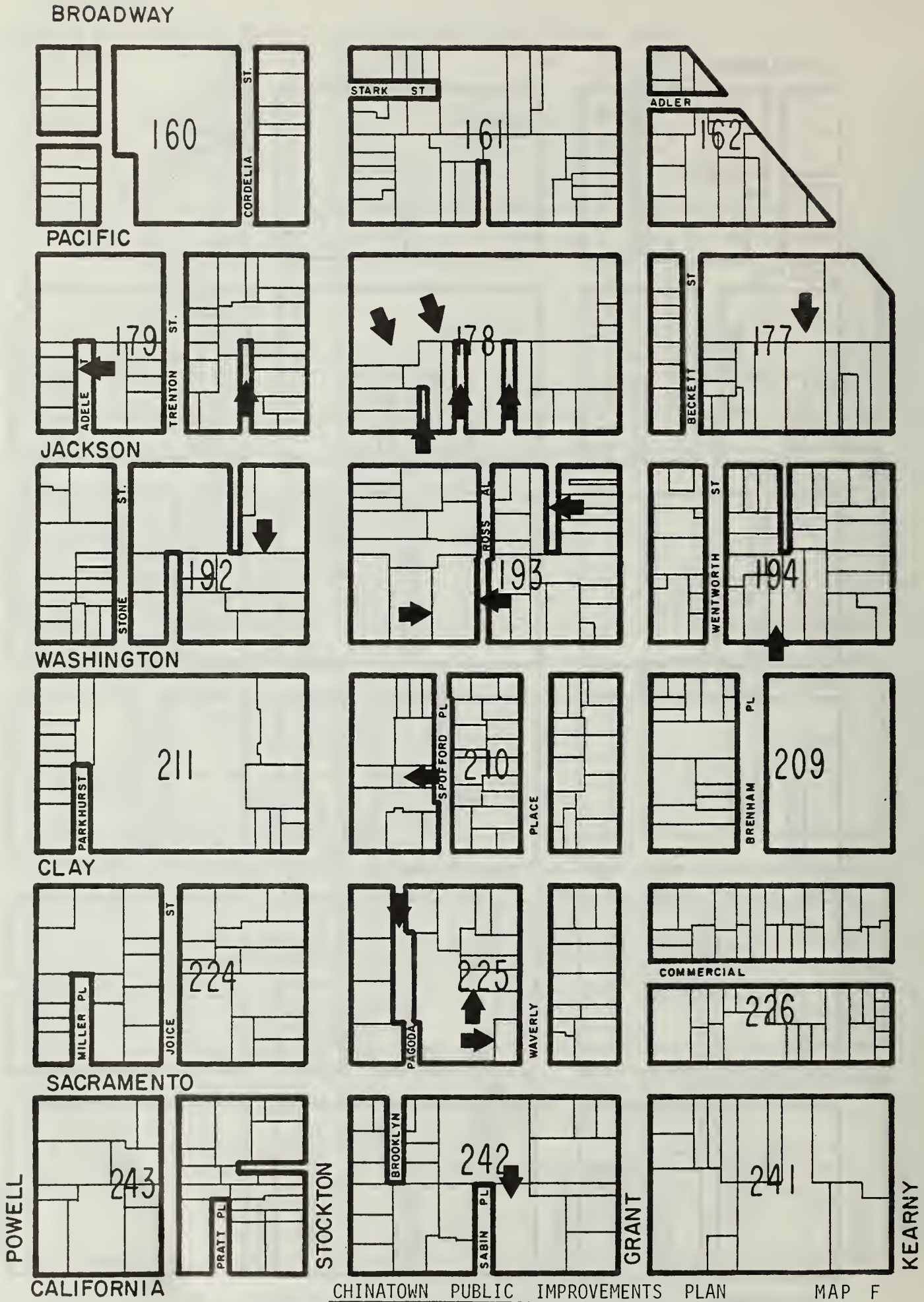
MAP D



CHINATOWN PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

Potential Wall Mural Locations

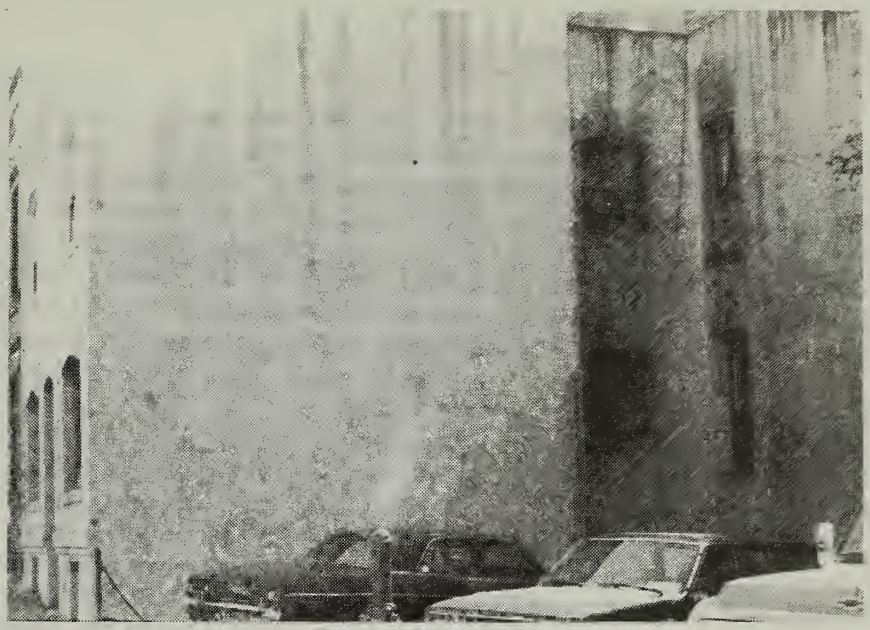
MAP E



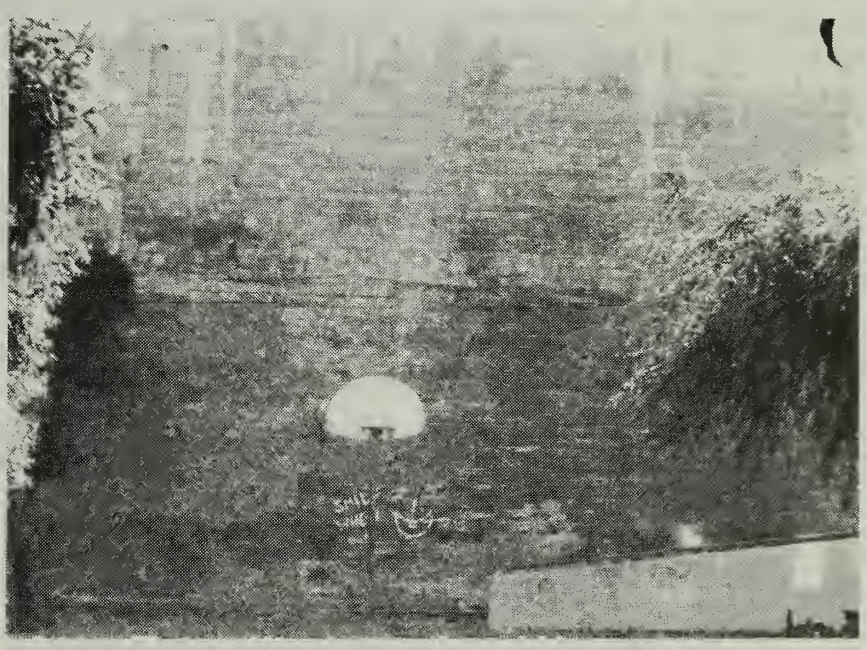
CHINATOWN PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS PLAN MAP F

Potential Blank Wall Painting Locations

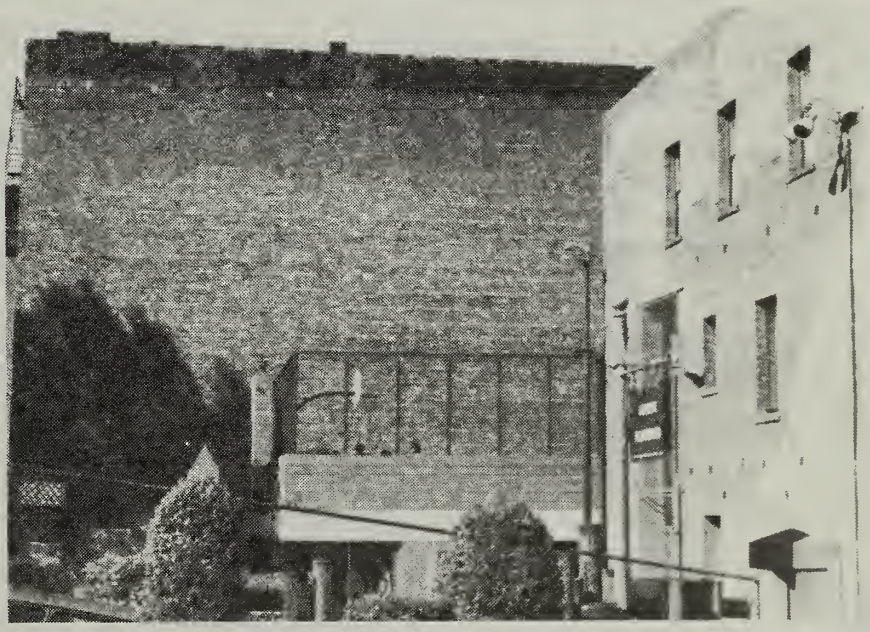
Trenton Street.
Potential wall mural
location.



Ping Yuen courtyard.
Potential blank wall
painting locations.



Chinese Playground.
Potential blank wall
painting and/or
mural locations.



2. Blank Wall Painting

Potential locations for blank wall painting were field inventoried. Seventeen locations were noted with a total area of approximately 75,000 sq. ft. and are shown on Map F. Criteria for choosing these locations were visibility to greatest number of residents and the public, immediate impact on and improvement to the area, appropriate overall wall size, and compatibility with adjacent uses. A rating and evaluation process will further determine final sites as will negotiations with property owners.

3. Painting of Light Courts

Using the Department's Sanborne Maps, six blocks in the Core Area were mapped in detail for locations and area of light courts and light wells between residential buildings. For the entire Core Area it is estimated that there exists 846,000 sq. ft. of light court and light well wall area related to residential buildings. Assuming a 50 percent owner participation means 423,000 sq. ft. of walls could be painted. Negotiations with owners and related tasks would be carried out by the painting coordinator.

4. Painting Assistance and Coordination

This position would include at least two person-years extended over the program duration. This person would assist in the refined inventory of sites to be painted, negotiations with property owners, and assistance to the actual painting personnel.

E. Pedestrian Safety Projects (See Map G)

Improvements to the following intersections are designed to increase the safety of pedestrians crossing streets and better control vehicular flow.

1. Pacific/Kearny/Columbus

a. Change traffic signal timing to allow pedestrians more time to cross the street.

b. Install additional traffic control signs to reduce driver confusion and control vehicle flow.

c. Provide reflective markers to better define crosswalks at night.

d. Increase street lighting intensity at intersection.

F. Street Paving Restoration

Potholes and rough street surfaces are dangerous to vehicles and pedestrians and are a visual eyesore to the neighborhood. They create noise when heavy vehicles go over them. Paving improvements should be made to the following streets:

1. Repave Washington between Stockton and Grant.

2. Repave Jackson in selected areas between Stockton and Grant.

3. Restore brick paving in selected areas on Commercial Street between Grant and Kearny.

2. Powell and Broadway

a. Change signal timing to assist pedestrians crossing Broadway.

b. Install reflective crosswalk markers for increased nighttime safety.

c. Install flashing yellow lights on Broadway to warn traffic of the intersection.

d. Install new left turn signal phase on existing traffic signal on Broadway to Powell.

3. Grant and Broadway

a. Build new pedestrian crosswalk with reflective markers across Broadway.

b. Provide traffic signal phase for pedestrians crossing Broadway at Grant and for traffic turning from Grant to Broadway.

4. Powell and Pacific, and Jackson and Columbus Streets

a. Install new traffic signals.

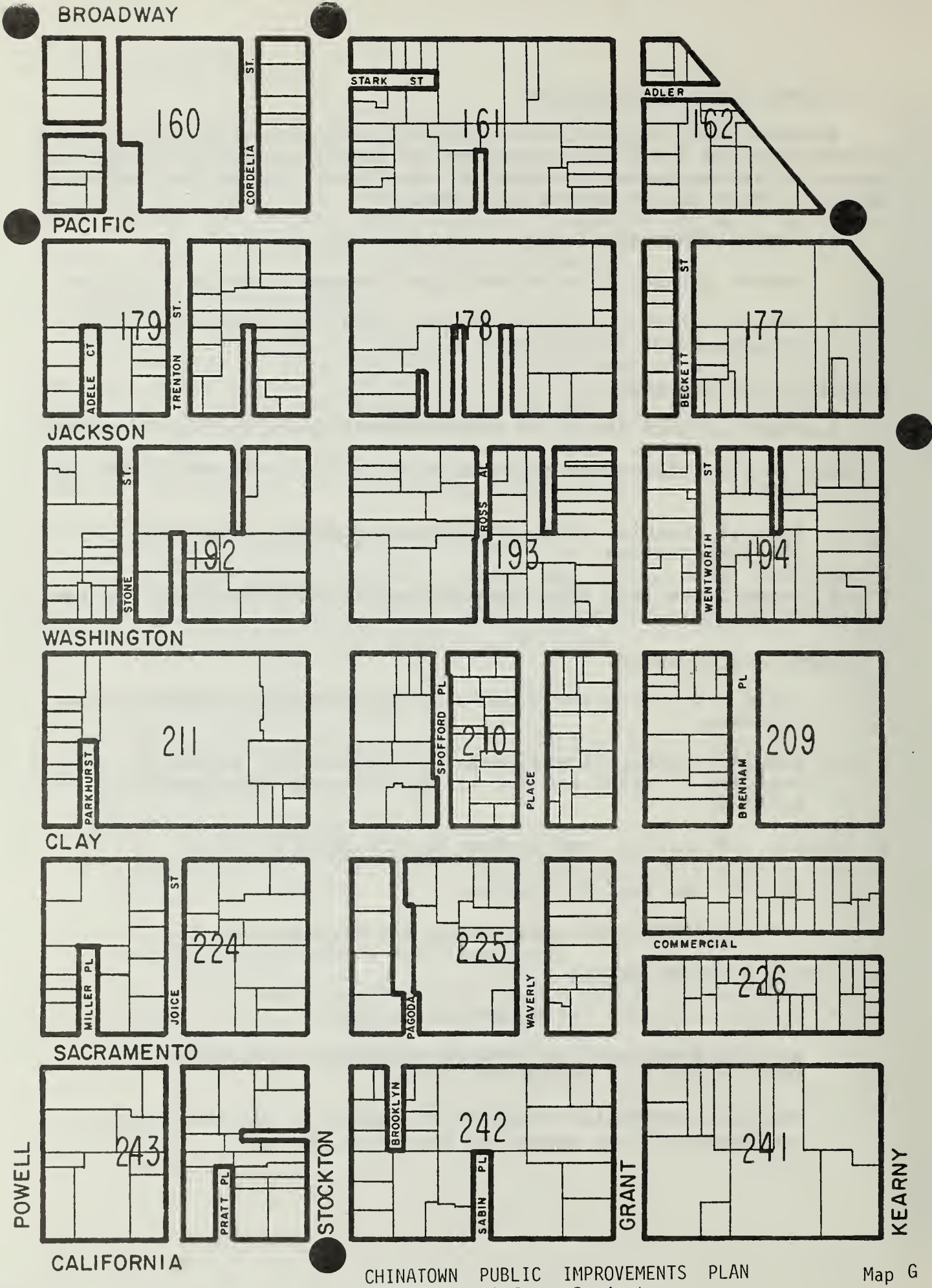
b. Provide crosswalks with reflective markers.

5. Stockton Street Tunnel

a. Upgrade lighting for pedestrian safety.

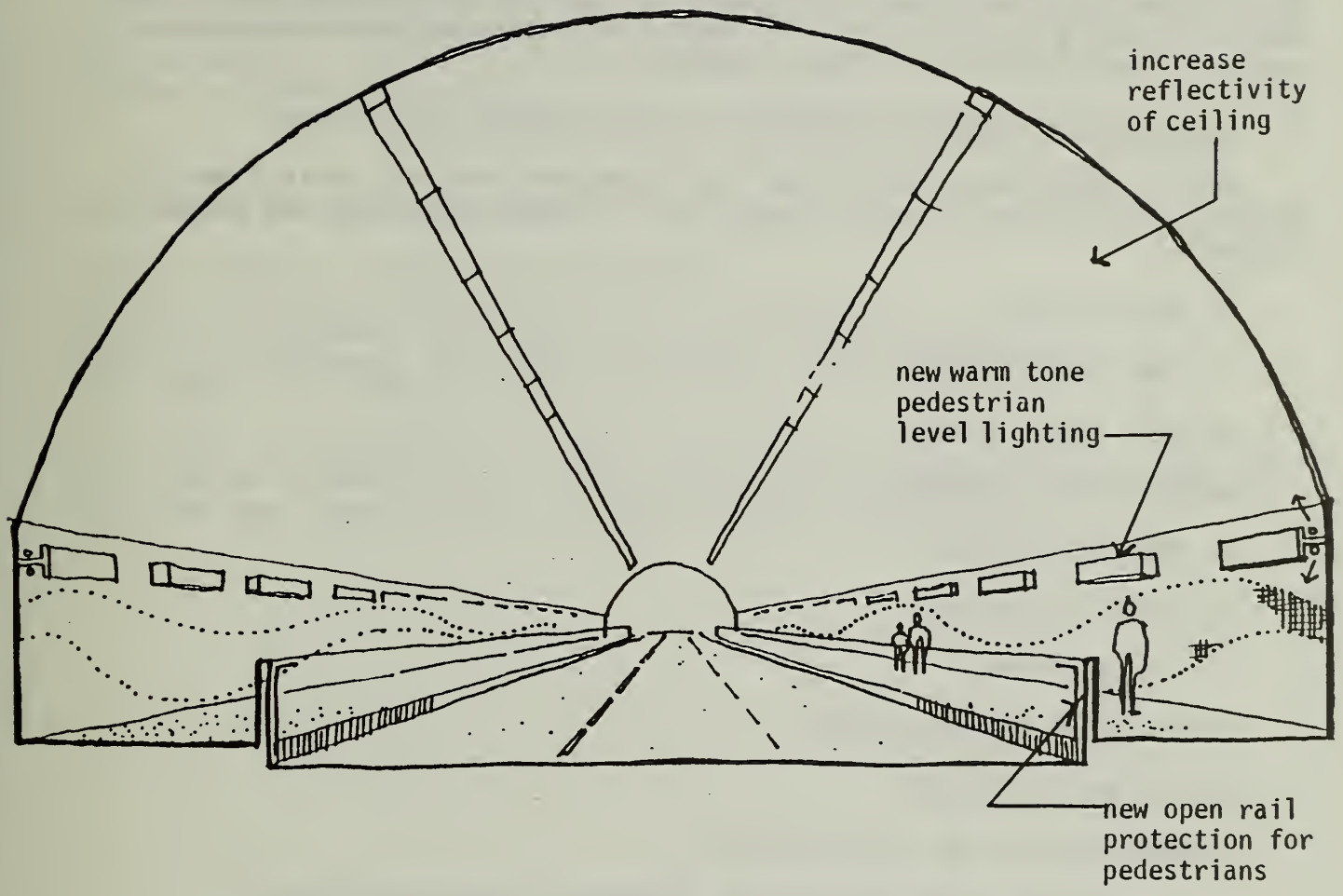
b. Install guard rail or barrier along curb to protect pedestrians from moving vehicles.

c. Evaluate pedestrian safety with regard to the new transit preferential lane impact at the south portal.



CHINATOWN PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS PLAN
Pedestrian Safety Projects

Map G



POSSIBLE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS TO THE STOCKTON ST. TUNNEL

Source: Tudor Engineering

G. Undergrounding Utility Lines

Most of the Chinatown Core Area has undergrounded utilities where power and communication wires are buried beneath the street. However, Joice Alley, Spofford, Wentworth, Beckett, Stone Street and Washington between Powell and Stockton Streets still have overhead utility wires and poles. Overhead wires not only detract from the neighborhood character, they can create certain safety hazards. Numerous overhead power lines in dense residential areas can hinder fire fighting operations and limit the use of rescue ladders. The undergrounding of utility wires would improve the appearance and minimize the hazards of these streets.

H. Centralized Garbage Receptacles and Garbage Collection

While additional locations are being determined, this type of project has potential on at least the following alleys and small streets.

1. Ross Alley
2. Spofford Street
3. St. Louis Place
4. Wentworth Street
5. Beckett Street
6. Trenton Street
7. Joice Street
8. Hang Ah/Pagoda Place
9. Cordelia Street

Components to be included are:

1. Centralized dumpster with compactor capability, key activation and automatic accounting potential.
2. Centralized collection locations.
3. Containers for garbage cans.
4. Litter receptacles.
5. Coordination assistance to implement the project.
6. Maintenance coordination.

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